

July 3, 2008

**Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste
Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)**

California Department of Transportation – District 4
Highway 101 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)
Wilfred Avenue Interchange Project:
WDID No. 1B08072WNSO

Sonoma County

On April 10, 2008, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), requesting Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to the proposed Highway 101 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Wilfred Avenue Interchange project (project). The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States (U.S.) and waters of the State, wetlands and drainage ditches within the Russian River Hydrologic Unit No.114.00, Laguna Hydrologic Sub-Area No. 114.21.

The project is located along Highway 101 in Sonoma County, from the Santa Rosa Avenue overcrossing to the Rohnert Park Expressway overcrossing, which extends from post mile (PM) 13.9 to PM 15.5. The purposes of the project are to complete one of the remaining portions of the planned continuous Highway 101 HOV system, to reduce traffic congestion, and to address existing roadway and operational deficiencies.

The total project area is approximately 26.43 acres, including all staging areas. The majority of the land to be converted to transportation structure is existing State-owned right of way.

The proposed actions for the project will consist of: widening Highway 101 from four lanes to six lanes; constructing a two lane collector distributor road between Wilfred Avenue and Santa Rosa Avenue; modifying and adding new drainage structures; modifying the Wilfred Avenue overhead bridge connecting Wilfred Avenue and Golf Course Drive; realigning and reconstructing ramps; installing ramp metering, and modifying the park and ride at Roberts Lake Road.

The project will result in permanent impacts to 0.373 acres of waters of the U.S. and 0.063 acres of water of the State, for a total of 0.436 acres of permanent impacts. In addition, 0.049 acres of water of the U.S. will be temporarily impacted as well as 0.058 acres of waters of the State, for a total of 0.107 acres of temporary impacts. All proposed impacts within this project affect wetlands or drainage ditches with wetland features. None of the proposed work is anticipated to directly impact any nearby creeks or riparian zones. All graded areas within the project affected by the construction activities will be appropriately stabilized. In addition, construction and post construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be implemented to ensure erosion is minimized and controlled.

Compensatory mitigation requirements for loss of waters of the State and waters of the U.S. associated with project will be fulfilled through the purchase of off-site mitigation credits, and through on-site mitigation work. To mitigate for permanent project impacts, at least 0.436 acres of mitigation credits will be purchased from an approved mitigation bank. In accordance with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) revised Biological Opinion, dated April 15, 2008 the required acreage of off-site credits to be purchased are: 5.27 acres of California Tiger Salamander (CTS) dispersal habitat; 0.7

acres of occupied or established special species plant habitat; and 0.35 acres of established special species plant habitat. Caltrans is pursuing the purchase of mitigation credits from a variety of agency approved mitigation banks within the region. All mitigation credits will be purchased no later than seven days prior to construction. Mitigation for the temporary impacts associated with the project will be performed on-site at a 1.5 to 1 ratio, and will include replanting and revegetation activities.

The project will result in an increase of 10.13 acres of impervious area. Caltrans will treat the increases in storm water runoff and hydro-modification of the project area through various means, primarily through the use of bio-strips that rely on retention and dispersion. For soils that are not ideal for these treatment controls, Caltrans will amend the soil so that it is more suitable.

The applicant has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to perform the project under their Nationwide Permits No. 14, 33 and 38 (linear transportation projects, temporary construction, access and dewatering, and cleanup of hazardous and toxic waste) pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. On June 18, 2004, Caltrans certified a Negative Declaration (State Clearing House No.2004072103) for the Project in order to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Regional Water Board has considered the environmental document.

Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all phone calls and comments submitted in writing and received within a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Jeremiah Puget at (707) 576-2835 or jpuget@waterboards.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the applicant's proposed road construction activities. The application for Water Quality Certification in the Regional Water Board's file contains additional details about the proposed project including maps and design drawings. The related documents and comments received are on file and may be reviewed or copied at the Regional Water Board office, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California. Appointments are recommended for document review. Appointments can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.